Favorite Psalms of the Biola Institute Hour Listeners

Chester J. Padgett

Follow this and additional works at: https://digitalcommons.biola.edu/biola-radio-pubs

Part of the Biblical Studies Commons

Recommended Citation
Padgett, Chester J., "Favorite Psalms of the Biola Institute Hour Listeners" (1956). Biola Radio Publications. 146.
https://digitalcommons.biola.edu/biola-radio-pubs/146

This Book is brought to you for free and open access by the Biola Radio at Digital Commons @ Biola. It has been accepted for inclusion in Biola Radio Publications by an authorized administrator of Digital Commons @ Biola. For more information, please contact eileen.walraven@biola.edu.
Favorite Psalms

OF THE

Bible Institute Hour

Listeners

by

CHESTER J. PADGETT, D.D.

AS GIVEN OVER NETWORK BROADCASTS OF THE

Bible Institute Hour

8:30 A.M. - MON., WED., FRI.
MUTUAL DON-LEE NETWORK
FOREWORD

These simple studies in the Psalms contain the material given during the summer months of 1956, over the Don Lee Mutual Network, on the Bible Institute Hour, by Dr. Chester J. Padgett, associate professor of English Bible in the Talbot Theological Seminary, one of the schools connected with the Bible Institute of Los Angeles. It has been a great joy to meet our radio friends via the airwaves. We are grateful for your fine response to our program. We gladly send this booklet into your hands with the earnest prayer that the Lord Jesus Christ may through the reading and study of these Psalms become all the more precious to each believer.
INTRODUCTION TO THE PSALMS

Their arrangement: The 150 Psalms were arranged into the five books as we now have them by Hebrew scholars sometime before the end of the second century before Christ. Most of the Psalms were probably written during David's time (ca. 1000 B.C.) although some of them seem to date to the time of the Exile or shortly after (ca. the fifth century before Christ.) The five books of Psalms are arranged as follows: book 1: Psalms 1-41; book 2: Psalms 42-72; book 3: Psalms 73-89; book 4: Psalms 90-106; book 5: Psalms 107-150.

Their authors: Some six names are connected with book of Psalms: David, author of approximately 72, or nearly half of the Psalms; Solomon, author of 2 Psalms; Moses, author of one Psalm; Asaph, author of 12 Psalms; the sons of Korah, authors of 11 Psalms; Ethan, author of 1 Psalm; and anonymous, 50 Psalms. It is the judgment of the author of the book that where no name is ascribed to a Psalm David is the probable author, unless there are valid internal evidences against the Davidic authorship.

Their classification: The Psalms deal with a variety of subjects, the most popular being the following: devotional, Messianic, confessional, philosophic or meditative, national, and imprecatory.

Their uses: The book of Psalms serves as the inspired prayer and praise book of the Church. It is used in responsive readings, in private and family and group devotion, in the sick room, in times of sorrow and suffering, in times of depression and spiritual fainting fits — in short, there are Psalms for almost every conceivable situation and occasion. No wonder this is one of the most popular sections of the Word of God!

THE HAPPY MAN'S PSALM
(Psalm 1)

Psalm 1 is a fitting Psalm to prelude the book of Psalms. It begins with a wonderful word — "blessed." This word means happy. God wants each one of His children to be happy. The only requirement for happiness is holiness. You will note in the Psalm a description of the man who walks in the light of God's holy Word — he is the happy man; the man who will not walk in the light of the Word is not and cannot be happy in this world or in the next.
Some Things the Happy Man Does Not Do

(v. 1)

He does not walk in the counsel of the ungodly. All teaching that is contrary to the Word of God is “ungodly” counsel. Our schools today are filled with this kind of teaching. How our hearts go out to young people who are the victims of false and Christless teaching! How every Christian ought to support such schools as the Bible Institute of Los Angeles where the Word of God is the textbook and the Lord Jesus Christ is the center of all education and training!

He does not stand in the way of sinners. This means that the believer will not associate himself with those who walk contrary to the Word of God. Walking in the counsel of the ungodly always leads to standing in fellowship with those who reject Christ.

He does not sit in the seat of the scornful. This is the last step in full departure from God. Now the soul has become inurred to the Truth of God, the conscience has become seared, and the mind has become critical of spiritual things. Sad condition!

The Happy Man’s Main Emphasis

(v. 2)

He delights in the law of the Lord. To some the Bible is a dull, dry, and disinteresting Book. But to the man of God the Bible lives and sparkles. See how David loved the Word of God (Psa. 119:72, 97, 103, 127; see how Jeremiah loved God’s Word (Jer. 15:16); see how Paul revered the holy Word (II Tim. 2:15; 3:16-17.) Dear friend, do you love the Bible?

He meditates in the Word of God. Meditation is a lost art because we are living in a busy, rushing television age. Happy is the believer who refuses to let anything pull him away from those few precious minutes of quiet meditation on the Word. To this believer the Word becomes food for the soul.

The Happy Man’s Manner of Life

(v. 3)

He shall be like a tree. This is a marvellous description of the believer. A tree is something beautiful, something useful. The Christian life ought to be characterized likewise.

He is like a planted tree. God is the Divine Gardener and He plants precious souls in His forest of trees. This speaks of stability and durability and strength.

He is planted by rivers of water. The believer draws from an unending source of spiritual supply. The grace of God is inexhaustible. His power is limitless (Eph. 6:10; Phil. 4:13.)

He produces his fruit seasonally. Every child of God brings forth some fruit — some bring forth abundantly; others bring forth meagerly; but all show some evidence of the Holy Spirit’s work (John 15:1-16.)

And this is seasonal production, that is, when joy is needed it is there, when peace is needed it is there, when love is needed it is there, etc.

He is perennial in his living for Christ. The life of the true believer will never fade and die. It may sometimes get sick and weakened by sin or lack of faith, but God will nurture it and bring it out of its slump (Heb. 12:3-13.)

He is always successful. The Christian cannot fail. God has promised to see him through (Phil. 1:6.) The true believer is blessed of God spiritually, and in most cases, materially, at least in the full supply of every need (Phil. 4:19.)

The Way of the Unhappy Man

(vs. 4-6)

Nothing that has been said of the happy man can be said of the poor, miserable sinner. He is the world’s most unhappy man; and, poor creature, he makes himself sad in this life and will be sad throughout eternity!

The Resurrection Psalm

(Psalm 16)

This is the Psalm Peter used as one of his texts on the day of Pentecost (Acts 2). He uses the last three verses to prove the bodily resurrection of our Lord, and thus shows us that the Holy Spirit intended these verses to be prophetic of Christ. In fact the entire Psalm is Messianic. All in all, this too, is a very happy Psalm.

Here is Prayer

(vs. 1-3)

The Psalmist prays for preservation. It is good to make this our prayer because it shows us that we distrust ourselves and depend entirely upon our God for His sustaining grace.
The Psalmist's prayer is spiritual — he addressed the Lord through his soul. This means that he has come into vital contact with God. Some people have a head knowledge of the Lord, but no real experience with Him. In the Christian experience the Lord Himself takes up His abode in the soul (I Cor. 6:19-20; Gal. 2:20; Phil. 1:21-23.)

The Psalmist's prayer had others in mind (v. 3.) The meaning of this rather difficult passage is, I think, that the Psalmist knows he has no personal merit toward God, but that through the grace of God he can be used to bring blessing to those around him. (Matt. 5:13-16.)

Here is Praise
(vs. 4-11)

David praises God because he is fully satisfied with the Lord (vs. 4-6). He has compared the life of the unbeliever (v. 4) with the life of the child of God and to him there is no comparison, only tremendous contrast! In the light of this fact he promises God that he will never become identified with those who despise the Lord. He is fully at peace in his soul because God fills his very life (v. 5), and he is content with the lot the Lord had chosen for him (v. 6.) Such contentment is worth more than this world's total worth!

David praises God for His instruction (v. 7.) When God gives His counsel we know we are walking in the light. Happy is the man who listens to God as He speaks through His holy Word!

David praises God for the inspiration of His Presence (v. 8.) Note that the Psalmist had deliberately by an act of his own will set the Lord before him. This every believer can do and must do if he would enjoy the fellowship of the Lord. As the Lord filled David's horizon he found the inspiration needed to serve the Lord in the beauty of holiness; and he found the stability of character and service that marks every believer who has done this important thing.

The Psalmist was thankful for the hope that blazed in his heart. (vs. 9-11.) This hope is three-fold: 1) the care and protection of the soul at death (v. 10a.); 2) the care of the body. Although the bodies of saints do decay, yet God will preserve the bodily identity and restore it at the day of resurrection. In the case of our Lord His precious body was supernaturally preserved from corruption during those three days and three nights in the grave! 3) divine guidance into the very presence of God (v. 11.)

The Psalm of the Shepherd
(Psalm 23)

Here is probably the most famous piece of literature in all the world. Men never grow tired of this Psalm because it speaks a universal language and brings to every believer the sweet rest of soul that is his heritage.

The Lord as Shepherd
(vs. 1-4)

Note that David had made the Lord his shepherd. Some men trust in the protection of health or wealth but these are poor staffs on which to lean for they soon crumble. But the Lord endures forever. David says that the Lord is his shepherd — he does not say, the Lord was or will be my shepherd, — both are true; but David says that the Lord is my shepherd right now in this moment of my need. Again, the inspired Psalmist declares the Lord is his shepherd. David knew the full meaning of this word because he was himself a shepherd and had spent many a night and day on the desert and in the mountains tending his father's sheep. The word shepherd spoke of protection and personal care and sacrifice for the sheep; it spoke of feeding and pasturing and nursing — all these and more our blessed Lord does for His sheep.

Because the Lord was David's shepherd he was convinced that he would never want. If we ask the question, Want for what? we find the answer in the remainder of the Psalm.

David did not want for rest (v. 2.) This is a restless world and the people in it are terribly restless. Witness the pleasure mad crowds or the multitude bent on making money and getting power with never a thought of God or eternity! But the believer has rest deep down in his heart that keeps him steady in a changing world.

David did not want for peace (v. 2) The world cries, "Peace, peace," where there is no peace, for "there is no peace saith my God to wicked" (Isa. 48:22.) There will not be peace in the world among men and nations until the Prince of Peace comes back. In the meantime, however, every believer may have the peace of God in his heart no matter what the circumstances of his life may be (Phil. 4:6-7; John 14:27.) David had discovered this peace through trust in his Shepherd.

The Psalmist did not want for restoration (v. 3.) All of us know what it is to have drooping spirits and times of spiritual fainting and
depression. Our Heavenly Shepherd finds this in us and through His love, tender care restores our soul.

This man did not want for guidance (v. 3.) And very important guidance this — “in paths of righteousness”! The Holy Spirit always leads in holiness which is the way of happiness to the child of God. The reason? “for His name’s sake.” This means that God directs His child in paths of righteousness in order that he might be a witness among men and a credit to the Name of the Great Shepherd.

Nor did he want for courage. (v. 4.) This is one of the most precious verses in the entire Bible. Even through the awesome experience of death, the Psalmist was not afraid because he knew the Shepherd would be with him through the shadows until he reached the other side.

THE LORD AS HOST
(vs. 5-6)

There are two pictures of Christ in this Psalm — Christ as Shepherd (cf. John 10), and Christ as Host. He is a gracious and wonderful provider. David was aware of this fact and thus expressed that he would not want for provision. (5.) No good thing will the Lord withhold from him that walketh uprightly (Psa. 84:11.) What is your need today? God will supply according to His promise (Phil. 4:19.)

David did not want for divine unction (v. 5.) Oil in the Bible is a symbol of the Holy Spirit and of Christian joy. Through the unction of the Holy Spirit the believer understands the Word of God (John 2:27.) He is enabled to live for Christ in the power of the Spirit (Acts 1:8); and he is comforted by the Spirit in all afflictions (John 14:16).

The writer of this Psalm did not want for fulness of joy (v. 5.) The full cup is a symbol of overflowing joy in Christ. God wants his children to enjoy their experience in Christ and if the heart is yielded and obedient this joy is inevitable.

The sweet singer of Israel did not want for assurance and hope (v. 6.) God’s provision was not a temporary thing to David: he had full confidence that God would see him through to the end and that God’s goodness and mercy would constantly attend his way. And at the close of his earthly life he expected to dwell in the presence of the Lord forever. What a blessed hope! Dear friend, is it yours?
THE PSALM OF THE SOLDIER
(Psalm 27)

This is my favorite Psalm, and according to the radio response it is the favorite Psalm of many of our Bible Institute Hour listeners. The reason for the popularity of Psalm 27 is not hard to discover: it is a Psalm of battle, of victorious, triumphant battle. As such it is a fitting description of the Christian life (cf. Eph. 6:10-20.) Five words suggest themselves as we study the Psalm.

COURAGE
(vs. 1-3)

Apparently David was surrounded by his enemies who were intent on taking his life. In this situation the Psalmist turned to God and found supernatural courage which in turn brought repose and peace of soul.

_The Lord is the believer's light_ (v. 1.) This means illumination and spiritual warmth. God casts a floodlight upon the path and directs through the darkness of this world. This truth dissipates fear.

_The Lord is the believer's salvation_ (v. 1.) This means deliverance. God is able and willing to deliver all who put their trust in Christ. Such confidence allays our fears.

_The Lord is the believer's strength_ (v. 1.) Certainly the believer has no strength to live for Christ on his own. Paul's experience and teaching demonstrate this. (Rom. 7.) Our only strength is in Christ, and this is available to every believer. (Eph. 1:19-20; 6:10; Phil. 4:13.)

With this courageous attitude the believer faces his spiritual foes unafraid. (vs. 2-3.)

CONCENTRATION
(vs. 4)

The Psalmist's _one desire_ was to dwell in the presence of God. This is always the case when there is love. You want to be with the person you love. If we love the Lord we will want to be in fellowship with him always. But this was not a passive desire — David said, "that will I _seek_ after." The development of the Christian life is one of determination as well as desire. The believer can be just as good a Christian as he wants to be. The _purpose_ of David in wanting to be with the Lord was two-
fold: "To behold the beauty of the Lord . . ." The most beautiful thing in the world is Christian character patterned after the beauty of Christ Himself. The second reason for the Psalmist's spiritual concentration was for instruction — "to enquire in his temple." Like Mary, David would sit at Jesus' feet and learn of Him.

**CONTENTMENT**

(vs. 5-6)

The writer was sweetly resting in the will of God. He faced all difficulties in the wonderful confidence that God would deliver him out of them all and would preserve him in the midst of any trial (v. 4.)

David expected constant victory (v. 5.) No going on at a "poor dying rate" for this man. And he had the joy of victory over his spiritual enemies. This is the birthright of every Christian (Rom. 7:25; II Cor. 2:14).

**COMMUNION**

(vs. 7-13)

The one thing David feared more than anything else was the possibility of losing the fellowship of the Lord through sin. His heart responded to God's gracious invitation to commune with Him (v. 8.), and once one has been in the presence of God by faith nothing else could take its place (v. 9.) In order to remain in that blessed "secret place" David knew he needed the help of God. He prays, therefore, that th Lord would be his instructor (v. 11), and his guide (v. 11), and he has full confidence that God will extend His perpetual goodness to His servant (v. 13.)

**CONTINUANCE**

(v. 14)

The best way to continue in fellowship with Christ is to wait before Him, to spend time in His presence in prayer and meditation on the Word. It is here that many of us fail. We lose out with Christ and limp along on meagre fare because we are not willing to spend the necessary time in the development of our spiritual lives.

**THE PSALM OF DIVINE FORGIVENESS**

(Psalm 32)

This Psalm together with Psalm 52 constitute the most famous Psalms of Confession in the entire Psalter. In both the writer expresses the utterable joy of divine forgiveness.

**IMPUTED RIGHTEOUSNESS**

(vs. 1-2)

The Apostle Paul uses this statement from the pen of David as an illustration of the doctrine of justification by faith (Rom. 4:6-8.) Here is imputed righteousness. This means that God clothes the believer with His own spotless holiness only on the basis of faith, — in the New Testament, faith in the Lord Jesus Christ as the substitute for sinners (Rom. 5:1.) When we understand that this is the only way any sinner can ever have his guilt removed the doctrine becomes exceedingly precious!

**THE PROCESS**

(vs. 3-5)

How did David come to the place where he was ready to believe and thus become the recipient of divine righteousness and divine forgiveness?

First there was conviction (vs. 3-4.) Every sinner saved by grace knows the convicting power of the Spirit of God through the Word. And how he ought to thank God for this conviction, for without it he would never have sought the Lord! Conviction of sin leading to Christ is a work of God's Spirit sovereignly bestowed on God's elect to lead them to Christ.

Following conviction comes confession (v. 5). There can be no divine forgiveness apart from confession of sin. Note that David owned his own sin — he did not try to evade the issue, nor rationalize, nor blame someone else. He admitted his sin and thus opened the door for forgiveness. David realized that his sin was an offense against God — this is the meaning of the words used — "sin," "iniquity," "transgressions." He confessed his sin, therefore, to God and not to man — "unto thee." And he received the divine forgiveness, even as God will grant this precious gift to all who will come to him via conviction and confession of sin.
THE RESULT
(vs. 6-11)

What happens when a man becomes aware of divine forgiveness? First, there comes a sense of the efficacy of prayer, and the assurance of the constant interest and watch-care of God (vv. 6-7.) If God is willing freely to forgive my sins when I confess them, then He is certainly ready and able to deliver me from every trial and temptation of life.

David discovered a new source of guidance (vs. 8-9). Once a man is brought into right relation with God the Holy Spirit begins to guide him through the Word. But guidance implies the necessity of obedience (v. 9.) Willing obedience to the will of God is a place of freedom from the tugging of the reins of conscience (v. 9.)

The Psalmist found his heart filled with joy (v. 11.) There is no joy comparable to that joy of unbroken, unmarred fellowship with the Lord Jesus Christ.

THE PSALM OF THE DISCONTENTED
(Psalm 37)

The inspired author of this Psalm had evidently gone through a difficult time, or he was writing to encourage someone whom he knew was terribly disillusioned about the affairs of life. Whenever we get our eyes fixed on men we are bound to get disappointed, and whenever we center our attention on the circumstances of life we are certain to become discouraged and disillusioned! This Psalm is all about how to overcome discontent.

Discontent is overcome by being realistic (vs. 1-2.) Just stop to reason for a little while and you will come to the conclusion that the "pleasures of sin" are but for "a season" (Heb. 11:25.) There is a payday someday. The wages of sin is death. Whatever a man sows that shall he also reap.

Discontent is overcome by trust (v. 3.) But not a passive trust. The believer is to be actively engaged in doing good, not in order to merit salvation, but because he is a child of God by faith and thus under a law of love to serve Him.

Discontent is overcome by putting Christ first (v. 4.) When the
Lord is the believer's delight he delights to do the Lord's will. He becomes so lost in the will of God that God's will is his will and thus he receives the desires of his heart.

Discontent is overcome by full surrender to God (v. 5.) To commit is to roll all burdens over on the Lord and to leave them there. Surely no Christian can be happy if he tries to shoulder all the ills of life himself.

Discontent is overcome by resting in the Lord (v. 7.) God wants us to relax in His omnipotent arms and to enjoy the feeling of security and well-being that can come only in this way. And He wants us to wait patiently for Him — we are not to rush ahead of Him, but trustingly follow Him. This is the path of peace.

Discontent is overcome by self-control (vs. 8-11.) How much misery is in the hearts of men today because they lose control of themselves and fly into fits of ungovernable anger! Anger is the enemy of contentment and ought not to be tolerated. God gives the victory.

Discontent is overcome by stressing the most important things (v. 16.) Success in life is not measured by how much a man has but by what he is. If he is walking in fellowship with the Lord he is rich indeed. It is better to be content with little having Christ, than to forsake Christ for all the world can offer.

Discontent is overcome by assurance of God's eternal love (vs. 23-40.) Even the best Christian will slip at times, but God will never let go of his hand (v. 24.) Those whom God has chosen unto Himself from all eternity will never be forsaken (v. 28.)

THE PSALM OF THE RANSOMED SOUL
(Psalm 40)

This Psalm presents a beautiful picture of the Lord Jesus Christ, brought from the pit of death by the power of God through the resurrection and then displaying the truth of God to the multitudes. The Psalm may also depict some terrible experience in the life of the Psalmist out of which the Lord delivered him. We will use the record with application to the believer's life.

A GREAT DELIVERANCE
(vs. 1-3)

In his sorry plight the Psalmist exercised faith and patience and endur-
ance (v. 1.) In God's time, which is always the best time, He delivered the Psalmist out of his predicament. The steps are given in vs. 2-3. First there was a bringing out (v. 2.) God lifted him out of his trouble, out of a trouble that was like miry clay from which there could be no extrication apart from divine help. What a picture of salvation from the guilt of sin! Only God could deliver us from this, and He has done so through our Lord Jesus Christ.

Having brought his servant out of the pit, God set him on a rock (v. 2.) There is a great deal of difference between miry clay and a solid rock. There is the same difference in the ideas and notions of men and human plans of salvation and the impregnable foundation which is the Lord Jesus (1 Cor. 3:11).

God never saves a soul to let that soul drift. He establishes that soul in Christ (v. 2.) I take this to mean that a believer is permanently situated in Christ and that he will never be removed from this position. (John 10:28-29; Phil. 1:6.)

Then comes praise. God tuned David up (v.3.) He does this for every Christian. The believer sings a new song, even praise unto God. The longer the Christian lives the more he comes to appreciate the grace of God in providing eternal redemption in Christ. This is something to sing about!

A LIVING SACRIFICE
(vs. 4-17)

In the light of all that God had done for David he expresses his joy in trusting in God (v. 4), and then praises God for His work of salvation and deliverance and instruction (v. 4.)

The question comes—"What does God want in return for His grace?" It is not any material sacrifice such as the blood of bulls and goats; rather it is the sacrifice of an obedient heart (vs. 6-8.) Obedience means more to God than any ritual or ceremony.

Out of gratitude the Psalmist told the multitudes of all that God had done for him (vs. 9-10.) Surely this is expected from every Christian! The redeemed of the Lord should say so! We ought not to be ashamed of Christ Who has done so much for us.

But one deliverance is not enough — David knew that there were other trials and temptations yet ahead and he prays for God's help and deliverance (vs. 11-17.)

THE PSALM OF QUIET TRUST
(Psalm 46)

This Psalm is near the top in our poll of popular Psalms. And rightly so. The Psalm breathes assurance and confidence in God even in the midst of world-shaking calamities. Because we are moving rapidly into the last days and because the Tribulation period cannot be very far in the future, Psalm 46 is becoming more and more popular with God's people. Thank God, believers will not go through the Tribulation (Luke 21:36; Rev. 3:10), but coming events cast their shadows before and things could get serious before the Rapture.

WORLD SHAKING EVENTS
(vs. 1-5)

David had found God to be three wonderful things to him: a refuge — a hiding place from the storm; a source of strength; and a present help in every time of difficulty. Knowing God in this way gives stability in shaky times.

Today the "earth" is being removed, and the "mountains" are being carried into the sea. Established institutions are crumbling, empires are disappearing, standards of conduct are changing, and more and more chaos is becoming the one descriptive term for the age. But none of these things move the Christian for he is anchored in Christ.

This situation is also true in many individual lives. Thousands are finding the pressures of life too great and are cracking up under the strain. Mental institutions are crowded to capacity. Multitudes are trying to find relief from their fears and frustrations by the use of drugs, dope and liquor, or by plunging into a reckless career of pleasure and sin. But this is not the way out! The way out is to trust wholly in God, to lean heavy on Him, and to know Him as our 'refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble.'

THE GLORIOUS FUTURE
(vs. 4-11)

The second half of the Psalm describes the intervention of God in establishing a new order in the world. This means, of course, the personal return of the Lord Jesus Christ to take control of the reins of government and to institute a righteous rule over the earth.

"There is a river. . . ." This is the river of God's grace, the source of all blessing for the world. Were it not that God is the God of all
grace there would be no world at all: He would have blotted it out ages ago! But God has purposes of grace for the world and is going to work out this plan by His sovereign power.

"... the city of God..." (vs. 4-5.) Jerusalem is going to be the capital city of the new Kingdom, and out of Jerusalem our Lord will reign. There can never be peace in the world until Christ comes back.

"He maketh wars to cease..." (v. 9.) What a welcome word is this in this day of armament races and the horrible prospects of all-out atomic warfare! Note that only God can make men stop the foolishness of war. War is possible only because man is sinful. Peace in the world cannot come until God forcefully breaks the military might of the nations. This He is going to do.

"Be still and know..." (v. 10). This is a precious verse. The Christian is not to be worried and anxious about the future; he knows that God is going to work all things out. He can rest in his soul in the knowledge that ultimately all nations will be brought under the control of Christ at His coming.

THE "WHAT'S THE USE" Psalm
(Psalm 73)
Every conceivable emotion possible to the human heart is evident in the Psalms. In Psalm 73 we find a very discouraged man. He was a believer, but he was defeated momentarily. He was perplexed about the apparent ease of life for the unbeliever and the rugged time he was having in his own life. To him it did not make sense the sinner should prosper and the believer should suffer. What is the answer to this dilemma? This Psalm gives the answer.

A STRANGE THING
(vs. 1-12)
The writer knew that God is good and that He had wonderfully bleft Israel throughout their history (v. 1.) But as for his own life he was in despair (v. 2.) He was filled with envy at the wicked and completely forgot the meaning of life and the purposes of God.

It seemed to the Psalmist as if the wicked were made to prosper and the righteous to suffer: the wicked were well-to-do (v. 3); they did not seem to die any differently than the unbeliever (v. 3.) The writer had evidently forgotten that many sinners die with a sense of false security — they think they are right with God when all the time they are far removed from Him. Satan is clever in thus deceiving men (II Cor. 4:3-4.)

The wicked did not seem to be plagued with trouble like believers are (v. 5.) But this is only because they do not have to fight the fight of faith; they are at peace with the "god of this world," namely, Satan, and do not have to war against his wiles (cf. Eph. 6:10-20).

The wicked are proud (v. 6), they are corrupt (v. 8), and still they seem to get along well, and in many cases better than the people of God! The Psalmist wanted to know the answer to this perplexing state of affairs.

THE Solution
(vs. 13-28)
So depressed and disillusioned was the Psalmist that he had just about decided to give up his faith and go back into the world again (vs. 13-14.) But his conscience would not let him do this, both for his own sake and that of his children and others who would be influenced by his lapse of faith (v. 15.) Nevertheless, he had pain in his heart over the situation (v. 16.) But he found the answer! Where did he find it — right where we would expect — in the house of God (v. 17.) The fellowship of the saints, the preaching of the Word of God, the ministry of the Holy Spirit — all this brought the truth to bear on the Psalmist's soul, and he came back into the light again.

The clear-eyed man sees that the sinner is standing in a slippery place, and could at any moment slip into judgment (vs. 18-20). Better to stand on the Rock and have trouble in this life for Jesus' sake, than to stand in slippery places ready at any moment to plunge into eternal doom!

And after all is said and done the most blessed place is the place of trust and obedience. Let us meditate on the wonderful truth of God's constant love and care (v. 23), His perpetual guidance (v. 24), His intent to bring us to glory (v. 24), and His ability to see us through (v. 26.) Such reasonings as these will give us the same desire as that which burned again in the Psalmist's heart — "... it is good for me to draw near to God..." (v. 28.)
The Psalm of the Sanctuary
(Psalm 84)

Here is the song of a man who loved the house of God. Do you ask, “Why do you so love the house of God?” In this Psalm the writer gives his inspired answer.

He loved the house of God because he loved the Lord (vs. 1-2.) To the Psalmist the place of prayer was a pleasant place because God was there meeting with His people. It is the presence of the living God that makes the fellowship of the saints so precious to the Christian. Once the Lord is personally known there is no substitute for His face in holy worship (v. 2.)

He loved the house of God because there he found a deep and wonderful peace (v. 3.) This is the picture I see in this verse: the birds of the air found a safe haven in the proximity of the temple buildings. What could speak of peace any more graphically than a wren or sparrow on her nest over her eggs? Dear friend, do you have this peace of God guarding your heart and mind? (Phil. 4:6-7.) You may find it in the house of God through the fellowship of God and His people, through the Holy Spirit and the Word.

He loved the house of God because there he found a place of praise (v. 4.) You will notice that the inspired writer says “blessed are they that dwell in thy house...” As we noted in Psa. 1:1, this word means happy. There is great happiness in the place of worship. Again, let us not skip over the word “dwell.” The fulness of blessing to the believer comes when he keeps in steady contact with the house of God. Praise is good for the soul; it is a tonic; it is a spiritual muscle builder; it is a good thing to give thanks unto the Lord.

He loved the house of God because there he found strength (vs. 5-7.) Physical strength is good and we thank God for the gift of health; but spiritual health is better. Such strength is not to be found in the discipline of the body but in the discipline of the soul, and this is learned as we sit at Jesus feet and listen to His Word. Spiritual strength is from God alone (Eph. 6:10.) Spiritual power is a matter of the heart — “... in whose heart are the ways of them (of God)” (v. 5.)

Spiritual strength never stands alone. Others are blessed by the spiritual stamina and fortitude of the believer. This is what is meant by reference to the Valley of Baca — the valley of weeping (v. 6.) When the believer comes to such arid regions in the souls of others he brings the refreshing water of salvation.

Spiritual strength increases the more it is exercised (v. 7.) There is no limit to the expansion of the soul. Study Paul’s inspired teaching along this line (Phil. 3), and Peter’s (II Peter 3:18.)

The Psalmist loved the house of God because there be came to know God better (vs. 8-9.) Note the names he applies to the Almighty: “Lord God of hosts”; this means the God of battle. God is the mighty One; He has never lost a battle and He will never lose a battle. The Christian is on the winning side! He is the “God of Jacob”: this means the covenant-keeping God; the God who cannot lie; the God who always remembers His Word and who will never go back on His promise. What a comfort in this day of covenant-breaking (II Tim. 3:3.) He is “our Shield”: this means the divine Protector and Defender of His people. Blessed be His Name!

The Psalmist loved the house of God because there he learned a right sense of values (v. 10.) In the presence of the Lord and in the fellowship of the saints this man came to see that one day with the Lord was better than a thousand days without Him. He would rather be an obscure servant of the Lord than to be praised and lauded of men. This is a lesson only sovereign grace can teach!

The Psalmist loved the house of God because there he found faith for today and hope for tomorrow (v. 11.) Who is not built up in faith when he knows God as his light and heat, and as his defense? Who can fall when he knows God as the giver of sufficient grace and the bestower of ultimate glory? Who can be cast down when he knows God as the beneficient One who will give every good thing to the obedient follower? No wonder, dear friend, that to this man “blessed is the man that trusteth in thee.”

The Psalm of the Aged Saint
(Psalm 90)

Here is one of the very special Psalms for the majority of believers. The response of our West coast listeners evidences this truth. And we do not wonder, for this Psalm speaks the language of the soul that has walked long with God along the hard roads of a difficult life.
THE SHORTNESS AND SORROW OF LIFE
(vs. 1-11)

Let us be honest — life at its best is overbalanced with sorrow and suffering. As long as we are in the flesh we are liable to all the ills and alarms of humanity. Well did Moses, the aged saint, know this. In the opening verses of the Psalm the inspired writer contrasts the eternity of God with the transitory character of human life.

"... thou hast been our dwelling place..." (v. 1.) Through forty weary years Moses had wandered with a rebellious people, living in tents like nomads, with no certain dwelling. He came, during these days of changing scenes, to revel in the permanency of God. So does every Spirit-taught Christian.

Note the brevity of life on earth: it is as "a watch in the night" (v. 4.) — the hours have gone by, the shadows are fleeing, another day is dawning, the past is forever gone. It is like a "flood" (v. 5.) — a raging torrent rushes through the ravines in a flash-flood, and almost as soon as it comes it is gone; so with life. It is like a sleep (v. 5.) No sooner have we hit the pillow than the accursed alarm clock emits its weird and unlovely sound; so with life — death comes before we begin to live! It is like the grass of the field (vs. 5-6.) One moment it is flourishing—green and lovely; the next moment it is dry and withered; so with life. It is like a story that has been told — there is no more (v. 9.) It is now a thing of history, and the years are forever beyond retrieving.

Note the seriousness and solemnity of life: There is destruction for those who do not love the Lord (v. 3.) This destruction is not annihilation, it is not cessation of being; it is eternal separation from the blessing and presence of God! There is divine awareness — He knows the sins we hide from men; our secret sins are open to Him. In the light of this truth life takes on new and important meaning; there will be a day of accounting and a day of reward and retribution.

THE MAN'S PRAYER
(vs. 12-17.)

Moses prays for spiritual insight (v. 12.) The burden of this prayer is that he might not miss the real meaning of life. He wanted to take the brevity of life into consideration in order that he might make the best possible investment of his life for God (cf. I Cor. 15:58; Gal. 6:9.)

He prayed for inner satisfaction with the goodness of God in this life (vs. 14-15.) How tragic to miss the Giver by concentrating on the gift. The goodness of God is designed to make us feel our dependence on Him not to make us feel independent of Him!

Moses prays for a manifestation of the power of God and the glory of God (v. 16.) It is to the shame of the Church that God’s transforming power and the glory of His presence is not more evident among His people. It is because of sin? Is it because of unbelief? Is it because of coldness and indifference? Great God, forgive us and melt us and move us!

Moses prays for the beauty of the Lord to rest upon His people (v. 17.) This is the beauty of holiness, the beauty of character, beside which all other beauty fades into ugliness. This beauty does not come naturally but supernaturally and by dwelling in His presence until His likeness is impressed upon the soul (II Cor. 3:18.)

Moses prays for God’s blessing on his labors (v. 17.) Labor unblest is labor lost. Nothing that is not done for Christ will last. Every structure erected on the sinking sands of human reason and human effort is bound to collapse. But each life built on Christ and built in the light of eternity will reap a rich harvest: this is work that will last. May God teach us that:

“There’s only one thing matters
In this passing world of sin;
That our lives should tell for Jesus,
Be of some account for Him.”
HELP TO

Give the winds a mighty VOICE!

Pray that God will continue to use the broadcasts to bring souls to Christ and to build up believers in the eternal truths of His Word.

Tell your friends to tune in to the broadcasts. Write for a free brochure listing the stations throughout the West carrying these testimonies for Christ.

Give regularly month by month for the maintenance of the programs over your local station. One dollar will take the gospel to more than six thousand people, many of whom would not attend church services.

"Little is much... when God is in it!"